



LITERARY SUPPLEMENT

75th Year

12 MARCH 1976
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TLS

THE TIMES LITERARY SUPPLEMENT

FRIDAY • 19 MARCH 1976 • No 3,862 • 18p

Machiavelli and his heirs

Liam Hudson on 'The Drama of Social Reality'

Poets: Ted Hughes, Gavin Ewart

Historians: Otto Hintze, Richard Cobb

Ulster: Inter-marriage, Unionism, Architecture

Can literature be psychoanalysed?

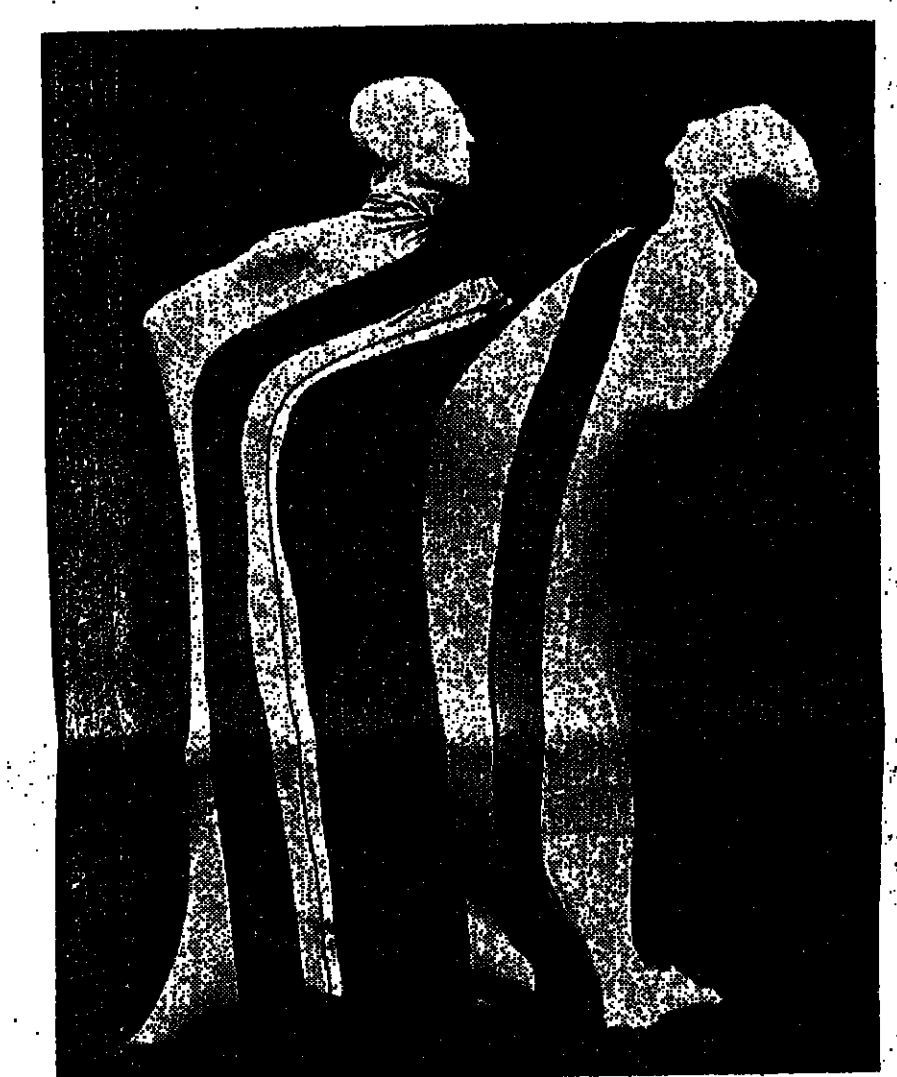
Coca and cocaine

The voyage of Ice Bird

Updike as critic

Commentary: Frank Kermode on 'One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest'

Fiction: N. F. Simpson, Christiaan Barnard, Françoise Sagan, Ursula Holden



Two dancers in Alvin Nikolai's ballet triple Duo, from the 1974 production in Paris: reproduced in Harrap's Stage Design Throughout the World 1970-1975 (see also page 312).

By Felix Gilbert

Misunderstanding of the book's

Professor Pocock gave a theoretical justification of such an approach some years ago in his essay "Languages and Their Implications: The Transformation of the Study of 'Political Thought'" in which he explored the proper role of the historian in the study of the history of the language of politics, and that the particular methodology needed for such an investigation gave the study of political thought its distinctiveness and autonomy. This is very different from the traditional procedure of this field. Neither is the study of political thought treated as a history of ideas, or as a study whose life experiences explain their contribution to the develop-

This connection can be shown only by careful reading of a text, from sentence to sentence, almost from word to word, and it can become evident to the reader only by making him a participant in such detailed textual study. This is a book to which the reader must give uninterrupted, close attention. This task is not simplified by the style of the book; it is terse and complex. The book was probably necessary in order to keep the book within a manageable size. I feel less sure about the need for complexity of style.

When Professor Pocock turns from textual interpretation to summarizing statements he writes sentences of impressive and brilliant simplicity. There are few scholars, I suspect, who would not like to have written what Professor Pocock said about Greek history.

Professor Potock does not seem unaware that there are limits to what he can do with his readers. He frequently inserts cautions and synthesizing statements, particularly at the beginning or end of chapters or sections. They fulfill an important function because they serve to tie together the wide range of span of many centuries of history into a unit. It has a thesis which is new and original, namely that from the fifteenth to the end of the eighteenth century a common political culture was used, at least among those who shaped societies which gave their members the possibility of active participation in politics. This was a kind of culture in which the concepts of justice, equality and corruption were central, and since these concepts, whether rightly or wrongly understood, were derived from classical political sources, the term civic humanism is accepted by Professor Potock as appropriate to designate the mood which he thought in early modern Europe with which this book is concerned.

This view, that from the fifteenth to the eighteenth century, civic humanism was an important element in political thought, implies one readjustment of views on the commonly held. With the exception of the brilliant but unique figure of Machiavelli, who wanted to separate politics from morality, the thought of the Italian Renaissance has been considered as closely tied to its own time, as an integral element in the intellectual climate of the period, and its importance and influence seem to cease when history moved away from Italy to other regions of Europe. Professor Pocock presents a much more positive valuation of the political thought that led to the English Renaissance, the political writers of this period are presented as the creators of the political language of civic humanism, and it is argued that the political rhetoric remained a dominant force in the eighteenth century, shaping even the thought of the American political thought. Professor Pocock's book, therefore, raises

More than 450 pages of Machiavellian Moment, his pages are devoted to the of the political thought of the Renaissance, and to a tion of the importance of the of civic humanism for the and American political until the eighteenth cen- tury. In his briefest first part, he means to establish the background of the entire also of unusual interest. Pocock discusses here how- ever, which he has touched in his essays: the transformation of Men have always made use in the past for steering through whether by following the of former generations or by on their own experience or those of their immediate an-

However, such a relatively
the past is not yet history. It
requires that the events of
the world be regarded as
isolated individuals, not
that they are connected
with the past and
must be viewed as being
cause of preceding
developments in order
the past with the changes
created a difficult problem
evolution of a historical
because although the present
Apocalyptic end might be
predicted with Christian
attempts to give meaning
to the sequence of human
was unthinkable because it
was a limitation of God's almighty
dom. The genesis of a new
epoch, therefore, began
connected with the process of
nationalization.

Professor Pocock's discuss the development involved in the origin of a historical outlook to be of the greatest interest to historians of historiography. In saying that most of these writers in this field find the treatment of this subject jumping from one historical period to the next—unsatisfactory, clearly, such studies ought to be organized around the function

the changes in function which historical literature and scholarship have undergone in the past four centuries. Such an approach, in dealing with the developments in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, will probably lead to placing great emphasis on the institutional changes which which history was taught. In the nineteenth century the impact which a wider audience had on creating new forms of presentation, deserves more attention than it has had. Professor Pocock's notions about the transition from the idea of a useful past to the idea of history can be considered as the outline of a dialogue for a satisfactory treatment of the history historiography.

For such a purpose, however, Professor Pocock's research will have to be expanded and lead beyond the point where he breaks off. The question of the development of a truly historical outlook is left in abeyance when secularization, interest in the surrounding world, produced a new, more active attitude to the political activity, and created a political landscape.


Professor Pocock considers that to have been the great achievement of the political writers of the Italian Renaissance, and he justifies this view with a detailed treatment of the genesis of a now political rhetoric in the political thought of this period. No doubt that Pocock will find this part of his book of "the greatest possible use". Numerous Florentine and Venetian political treatises and memoranda have been printed only in rare editions are now made more widely known, at least in their main features and aims. One might wonder whether Pocock's Vettori might not have deserved a chapter as a political writer in his own right and not simply as a recipient of Machiavelli's famous letter, and whether Pocock's treatment of Florentine History—a work of history and venom and remarkable chiefly because it was used by Machiavelli for his Florentine History—deserved more than a few pages of discussion.

But Professor Pocock does not intend to give us a balanced survey of the political ideas of Italian humanism but to establish a complex of concepts and ideas which was linked to what he considers the central problem of Renaissance political thought. It is concerned with the question "what the *vivere civile* and *virtus* could indeed be held stable in time". This question makes sense only in the framework of a self-determining society, i.e. it presupposes "a republican vision of history".

when political society is nearing complete disintegration, because only then can the life of society be placed on an entirely new basis. Such an innovative renewal requires a virtual rebirth, the process expressed by all those who attempt the renovation of society—whether an individual or a group—and which must be developed by those who are aware that is, in essence, the life of the renewed society. The innovator must have virtue of extraordinary strength because the presupposition of renewal is complete disintegration, the complete annihilation of the old. The innovator must have the wisdom to see the weakness of all those forces and factors which can resist the blows of external forces and which might hold men back from the corrupting seductions of the new and the seducing

tyrants, it is a social utopia. It is also the hour of virtue, the hour of Fortuna. "The politicisation of virtue had arrived at a discovery of a politicised version of Original Sin." The message that the only remedy for corruption is complete innovation is considered by Professor Pocock as Machiavelli's most original and most important contribution to the civil humanism of the Renaissance.

I have doubts about this interpretation of Machiavelli's thought.



Niccolò Machiavelli.

But sometimes he thought only of a constitutional reorganization which would shift power from one group of society to another. Moreover, he regarded as the crucial problem in political organization not innovation but renovation, return to the original constitutional form. That Machiavelli thinks not only of creating a social body, new in spirit and form, can be deduced from Chapter 18 of the first book of the *Discorsi* where Machiavelli considers "rinnovare a poco a poco".

Professor Pocock would have some justification to argue—as he suggested in his essay "Languages and Their Implications"—that we have to deal not only with the author's intentions but also with what he was taken to have said." Briefly, Professor Pocock would say that Machiavelli was taken to be a representative figure in civic humanism, and that the question of the correspondence with the question how virtue could be revived in a corrupt society, and innovation was for him the highest task that could be achieved by political action. Here it is that we find many of the problems that have troubled many of our political philosophers. Machiavelli was a unique figure, and not the representative of civic humanism. What most people say in him was the villainous Machiavelli pardoning murder and recommending a disregard for the same.

The more politically minded of his Machiavelli's writings, with their emphasis on the need for an aggressive power policy and with their doctrine of the interests of the state, the germs of a realistic political science. Quite consciously this part of Machiavelli's legacy is disregarded by professors. Pocock. Not until his procedure there he develops the ideas of history only to the point where they implied the creation of a new political language, he also selects from Machiavelli's intellectual legacy only one strand—the intermingling of his ideas with the ideas of civil humanism. The pursuit of this strand leads him to England and the British colonies in North America.

It seems astounding to malcontents that doctrines developed in and for the urban society of the Italian cities should have any bearing on the rural society of the American republics should have any bearing on a strongly agrarian country. But the "new" sciences of feudalism and capitalism, the "new" social sciences that "republican and feudalistic ideas" should "become domiciled in an environment dominated by monarchism and aristocratic concepts." According to Professor Croce, however, there were links which made the transplantation of Machiavelli's civic humanism to this new democratic social milieu possible, according to the existence of a strong Aristotelian tradition which created a common terminology. There was in English society a strong impulse toward "active morality."

It was crucial, however, that the seventeenth-century England also find the apocalyptic element which demanded a complete renovation of society and which in veneration's times and which in the time of the English Revolution brought a new flowering of the idea in England, apparently to a greater degree than in any other Protestant society. . . . Apocalyptic was national, a mode of seeing the nation as existing in a sacred secret, a mode providing the opening for the influx of ideas of political renewal and innovation. It is clear that this attitude was restricted to certain periods, the inner upheaval of the Puritan and the English groups and that they form the object of Professor Pocock's investigation.

The particular angle from which Professor Pocock interprets the thought of the radicals of the seventeenth century and of the English republicans provides a further demonstration of the way in which the complex character of their political thinking. In an interesting discussion of Michael Walzer's thesis in *Revolution and the Saints*, Pocock stresses that the revolutionary idealism of the civil war were only alienated saints but also permeated by traditional notions of English history. As can

expected, marriage, dependence on Italian politicians is evident, receives lengthy treatment. His *Oceano* "marks a moment of paradigm breakthrough, a major revisionism of English political theory and history in the light of concepts drawn from civic humanism and Macchiavellian republicanism." Harvey's case also supplies a striking and fascinating demonstration of the transformation which

A stylized black and white graphic featuring the text "SPRING BOOKS FROM EYRE METHUEN". The words are arranged in four lines: "SPRING BOOKS" at the top, followed by "FROM", then "EYRE" in large bold letters, and "METHUEN" at the bottom in the largest, most prominent bold letters. The background is filled with several five-pointed stars of varying sizes, some solid black and others outlined. A thick, jagged horizontal line runs across the middle of the composition, behind the word "EYRE".

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Renaissance notions had to undergo in order to become applicable to England's particular problems.

The main theme in the rest of *The Machiavellian Moment* is a demonstration that even after Huntington, far into the eighteenth century, the great issues of British politics—landed interests versus trading interests, county versus town, commerce versus power politics—were discussed in the language of civic humanism. Publicists wanted the reawakening of virtue and its preservation in order to halt the spread of corruption as the overriding political task. "Corruption," therefore, was a key term; as chief enemy of virtue it was the place which Fortune had led in the Renaissance. The attractive power of corruption was strengthened in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries by the use of the commercial classes: "When a government became corrupt," Huntington thought, it was because the citizens had ceased to display the virtues appropriate to it. The economic problems were political problems and it was possible to express economic issues in language of Machiavellian civic humanism.

Professor Pocock treats the economic literature of the eighteenth century in a chapter entitled "Neo-Machiavellian Political Economy," and Davenant, to whom he gives particular attention, becomes the representative of a "Machiavellian economics." This is not a bad simile, because Professor Pocock's description of the attempt to fit the morality of a rising bourgeoisie into the ethical system of a previous period will provide some welcome amusement to the readers of this even and unrelenting book.

Still, I am puzzled and bothered by this last part of Professor Pocock's book. Cannot we express some doubts about his thesis that the language of political discourse into the eighteenth century was still the language of Machiavellian civic humanism? Were the new problems completely absent in the political world? Was this language? Despite the fact that the language of the time was the language of the time, it is not clear that the language of the time was the language of the time. It is not clear that the language of the time was the language of the time.

It is characteristic that many of the seventeenth and eighteenth-century writers who spoke and wrote in the language of civic humanism were outsiders. It appears to me that Professor Pocock, although he has raised and answered many questions in his book, has failed to ask one question. With increasing distance from the early sixteenth century, did the language of civic humanism remain the rhetoric of politics, or did it become increasingly restricted to expressing the notions of political utopianism?

Professor Pocock's work has the unquestionable merit of demonstrating that the linguistic system in which political ideas are

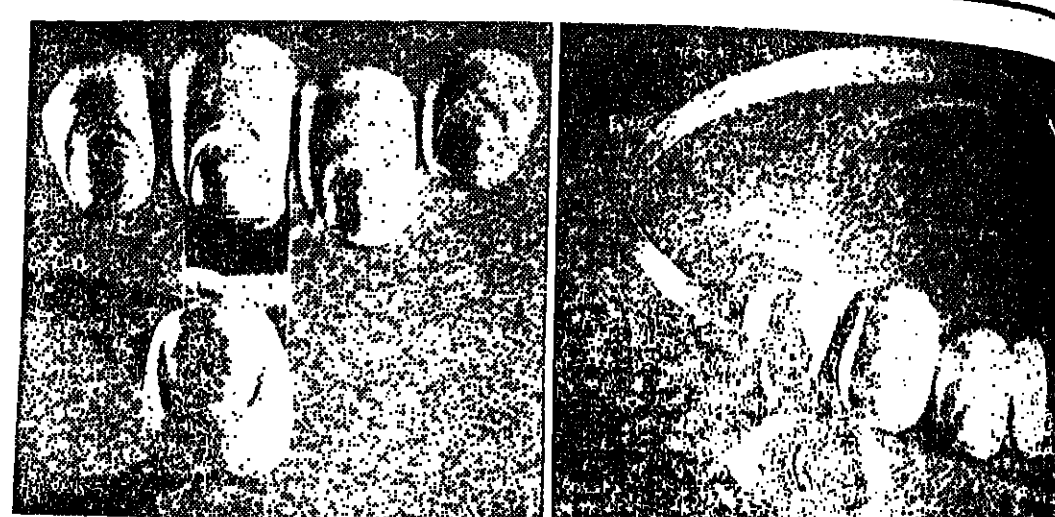
expressed patterns the context of these ideas. The problem whether he does not go too far in investing the rhetorics of politics with a determining and autonomous character.

There are two questions that have to be raised. The human vocabulary, as rich as it is, is limited. And all the nations of the European civilisation live on foundations laid in classical times. It would appear most probable that in certain situations they use expressions like virtue to which their classical origin has given a strong and deep ring. The use of such words does not need to indicate that the writer who uses them is bound to the linguistic system in which they occur at certain times. I cannot help wondering whether in pursuing the research on which Professor Pocock has embarked, a distinction ought not to be made between those terms which have meaning only within a particular system of political language and those key concepts which might also occur in this system but have a life also outside of it and above it.

In Professor Pocock's views on the history of political thought, the possibility of studying the language of politics as an autonomous structure is central. And it is certainly true that in *The Machiavellian Moment* outside factors—whether small or large—have only a small role or no role at all. But, does he not go too far in eliminating or restricting the impact of political events and social and economic developments on political thought? Professor Pocock's book is a history of the Machiavellian moment—of that moment in the alternatives are social disintegration or complete renewal.

But if one thinks when in European history a Machiavellian moment occurred, neither English Civil War of the seventeenth century nor the happenings in the British colonies of America come first to mind. One thinks of the French Revolution and of the reforms in Prussia. There we find hope for the beginning of an entirely new area, the appeal for a complete renewal of the social order. There we have the demand for an active participation in politics by every member of society. We have the call for a conversion to true virtue—whether this virtue is uttered in France by the virtuous Robespierre, or in Prussia, promoted by the young military men of the Yugenbund.

The model for this renewal of life was the heroic age of humanity, the world of the classics as it appeared in David's paintings or in Hölderlin's songs. But the language of civic humanism had not extended its way to the Machiavellian moment in France and Prussia. Certainly, Machiavelli had a part in the political innovations of these years—though not the half figure of the civic humanist but the full figure of the preached force and freedom. This was the time when Machiavelli was rediscovered in France and Germany. It was the time, too, when the new debate about Machiavelli began—a debate which continues to the present day, and to which Professor Pocock has made such a striking contribution.



A bracelet called "Goldfinger" in white and yellow gold, and a collar ("Women's Lib") by Bruno Martinazzi: from Ralph Turner's wide-ranging and informative survey, *Contemporary Jewellery*. Critical Assessment 1945-75 (208pp with 378 illustrations. Studio Vista, £12.50).

Not to be sniffed at

By Matthew Hodgart

GEORGE ANDREWS and DAVID SOLOMON (Editors): *The Coca Leaf and Cocaine Papers* 372pp. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, £4.25.

Erythroxylon coca is a shrub cultivated in the high Andes; it is the source of cocaine.

Live and be reined. On the hills like Gods together, careless of mankind. The leaves contain a number of alkaloids, the chief of which is cocaine (methyl benzoyl ecgonine). In the form of a white powder it is sniffed up the nose, causing euphoria, among other things. Though illegal it is currently fashionable in the United States, a land in which it is always afternoon. This collection of papers is a response to the fashion, but it is not a work of science, although it does contain some scientific material.

If it were, I should of course be incompetent to review it, since I possess no pharmaceutical knowledge and hold no informed opinions on the subject. (To decaffeinate anything else, I use alcohol, to look at it as a work of enlightenment and persuasion, one designed to dispel the clouds of ignorance and prejudice that surround the subject, to suggest that the use of coca leaves may be positively beneficial, and even to hint that it ought to be made legal. It is legitimate to examine the rhetoric and arguments employed and to see how far the book succeeds in its purpose.)

Most of the solid information is contained in three chapters, the papers by Richard T. Martin and by Andrew Weil (both trained scientists), and the "Consumers' Union Report". From these I learn that the plant was given divine status by the Incas; that it is widely held to increase endurance and to

alleviate hunger; and that it is not addictive or harmful. At least a prima facie case has been made out for the last claim, but it is not clear how much of the cocaine travels from the leaves, which are held for a long time as a liquid in the cheek, into the bloodstream via the stomach. There are some amusing historical anecdotes about the coca leaf, which in the 1880s was used by an ingenious Corsican called Mariani to make a tonic and testudinal tonic. It was from Blériot, Dumas, Duse, Edison, Gounod, Ibsen, Pope Leo XIII, President McKinley, Mussolini, Pope Pius X, Jules Verne and H. G. Wells, truly the Drink of the Gods. The idea was initiated in 1885 by the great John S. Pemberton, Atlanta, Georgia, who improved on it in the following year by adding an extract of the kola nut, containing caffeine, to coca leaves in the brilliant addition of fizzy water.

By 1906, when the Pure Food and Drug Law was passed in the United States, the company had switched from ordinary coca leaves to decaffeinated coca leaves. The formula of Coca-Cola is a secret, but the Consumers' Union alleges whether or not it contains any of the alkaloids of the coca leaf is unknown. This is all good fun, as is the historical and anthropological background provided by some of the other authors. More than half of the book consists of lengthy extracts from *Perry's History of Coca* (1901), by William Golden Mortimer, which offers much curious material about the Incas and the natural history of the coca leaf.

When the subject changes from the leaf to the extract from coca to cocaine, the argument becomes more clouded. The pure alkaloid was isolated, according to one authority, in 1860, according to another in 1844, but it hardly matters, since little use was made of it until the 1880s. It gained fame as a local anesthetic, especially for eye operations; and then it was taken up as a splendid general tonic by young Viennese physician, Sigmund Freud. He soon became a regular user and pressed the drug on his patients, friends, colleagues and fiancée. To the last he wrote in 1884:

Woe to you, my Princess, when I come, I will kiss you quite red and feed you till you are plump. And if you are forward you shall see who is the stronger, a gentle kiss or my wild man who has counted in his body. (Extracts in original) In my last severe depression I took coca again and a small dose lifted me to the heights in a wonderful fashion. I am just now busy collecting the literature for a song of praise to this magical substance.

Far from testifying to the virtues of cocaine, this only proves what an alcoholic Freud must have been at the age of twenty-eight. At this point the book gets crossed, since on the benefits of the drug without mentioning that in three years Freud became scared, kicked his habit, stopped prescribing the stuff. Nor do the editors annotate Freud's name among a mass of indiscriminate testimonials. The technique of persuasion employed

here rests largely on unsubstantiated and perhaps less opinions—back to the 1880s, the book "snow"; it is common knowledge that then and even later people have been only too ready to mend. Mariani's own remedies. Mortimer, I am somewhat unimpressed. I am somewhat unimpressed. I am somewhat unimpressed.

As to the value of the book, it cannot be the slightest bit to its utter banality. It is a question of the value of the book, it cannot be the slightest bit to its utter banality. It is a question of the value of the book, it cannot be the slightest bit to its utter banality.

Scattered throughout the book, are unambiguous statements of the nasty effects of sniffing it, for example, down things to the inside of a where one often sees cocaine crystals and dirt and crusts, sometimes actively from such crusts, with the usual reagents. I am not unimpressed by the presence of cocaine crystals that have been seen in the mouth of a person who has used cocaine.

These things, however, are not meant runs, only happen to me. I am not unimpressed by the presence of cocaine crystals that have been seen in the mouth of a person who has used cocaine.

The simple fermentation of coca leaves in hops and barley produces the mildly alcoholic soft drink beer, which is sold in bottles of 3 pints and 6 pints pure coca. However, if it is done in a short space of time, it can be a lethal combination.

And yet many have learned to use cocaine. All that is enough, but it does not prove that cocaine can be used safely or that they ought to be given an opportunity to try. In fact, I am a serious social critic, since it is mainly caused by the spirit, it is better to use it. Since I am a social critic, I am just now busy collecting the literature for a song of praise to this magical substance.

LITERATURE AND CRITICISM

Praising and sharing

By John Russell

JOHN UPDIKE: *Picked-Up Pieces* 567pp. Deutsch, £6.95.

Big-selling novelists do not always appear to advantage in their occasional writings. Some turn grouchy and competitive; others, like Updike, sometimes the difference in length, pace and tone glances shortcomings of character which the author in question contrived to keep out of his fictions. Altogether it's a touchy business.

But it is a business from which John Updike emerges very well. His new collection is a ten-year tally. It includes fifty book reviews, some poems, a parody of Iris Murdoch, drawings which remind us that Mr Updike was at one time a student of the Ruskin School in Oxford, England, three contributions to the literature of golf, some travel pieces, a conundrum interview and four speeches for foreign audiences (in English, French, Italian and Dutch). It is well over 500 pages, and it speaks everywhere a hospitable and unguarded intelligence. We can only be grateful that there were so many occasions on which Mr Updike did not say "No".

Those speeches, for instance, they were delivered in situations of the kind which Graham Greene optimized once and for all in his screenplay for *The Third Man*. A writer arrives in a city unfamiliar to him and pays for a peculiar (ground-trip, first class) with well-sounding generalities which may or may not please the locals. It is clear from the texts printed here that Mr Updike is no Demosthenes. Oratory as such has no place in his speeches. Their tone is confident, dry, witty and digressive. But it is also persistent. Ideas once glimpsed are pressed to a rapid conclusion; feelings once uncovered come across as unexpectedly raw.

We may be surprised for instance that this most idiosyncratic of writers should tell his audience in Australia that the writer's strength is not his own; he is a conduit who positions himself that the world at his back flows through to the readers on the other side of the page. To keep this confident, scoured is his laborious task; to be, in the act of writing, anonymous, the end of his quest for fame.

"Energy ebbs as we live," he told them a moment or two later; and more and more he thinks of himself as an instrument, a means whereby a time and a place make their mark. Given this, we may ask what time and what place will be seen to have made their mark in the work of Mr Updike, who is not in his mid-forties, has twenty-three books of his own on the shelf, and shows no signs of ebbing energies. He is specific about the intrusions of a particular time and place into books which are often read as if

they were entirely private in their resonance.

"In each of my books, a precise year is given and a President reigns. The Centenary of the Truman book and *Rabbit, Run* an Eisenhower one. Couples could have taken place only under Kennedy. . . . But the vital thing is to maintain alertness. That sense of Mr Updike's clarity: the air like the mow of an ice-breaker: into what significant communications will it next thrust itself? How far and to what purpose will he journey from Labor-in-vain Road, the street as a resident of which he for so long was improbably registered? *Picked-Up Pieces* gives us some ideas.

There is, for example, a three-line aside on the subject of his place in the world. It is a most autobiographical. "We were a family struggling on the poverty edge of the middle class during the Depression; I was keen to avoid my father's noisy slight towards the plague of competition; pencil and paper were cheap, unlike most other toys." The concerns to which he graduated not long after were unassuming by the standards of fifty or a hundred years ago: they were "to survive, to improve, to make my microcosms amusing to me and then to others, and to fail, if I fail I must, through neither artistic cowardice nor laziness. . . . That is not the tone of the book. . . . It is the tone of the Western world; but it is a fact of history that *Rabbit, Run* (1960), *Couples* (1968) and *Rabbit Redux* (1971) fulfil with a peculiar completeness Mr Updike's own demand that anyone dignified with the name of 'writer' should strive to discover or invent the verbal texture that most closely corresponds to the tone of life as it arrives on his nerves." (There is an echo in that phrase of what Francis Bacon has had to say about painting, though it is difficult to imagine two people with less in common.)

Picked-Up Pieces is primarily about changes of scene: journeys taken, unfamiliar writers explored, bourgeois and post-modernist, intelligent and a possible corrective. Mr Updike's is an expansive nature: "Better to praise and share than blame and ban." Is one of the unfashionable precepts which guide his practice as a reviewer, and although he writes as a private individual who lives some way out of New York and does not see himself as a literary politician, he has a sharp eye for the current of *Picked-Up Pieces* which leaves its mark.

It is about what he calls the something intolerable about a literary establishment—any literary establishment. If a harsh Providence were to obliterate, say, Alfred Kazin, Richard Gilman, Stanley Krampton and Irving Howe, tomorrow new critics would arise with the same worthy intelligence, the same complacently agonised humanity, the same inability to resist the same as a disappointing version of one they might have written, the same deadly "sunniness".

There is something of James's unlimited and unhurrying curiosity about the way in which Mr Updike takes Henry Green apart, takes V. S. Pritchett apart, takes his great favourite Nabokov apart, and takes his great favourite Nabokov apart.

"Vladimir Nabokov is, all in all," he tells us, "the best equipped writer in the English-speaking world." Mr Updike's textual critic is at his best in monitoring Nabokov's second thoughts—how "sensitive youth" turns into "young chronophobe" and "Dostoevskyan emotion" turns into "Dostoevskyan drink." His analysis reveals of single sentences who could produce something we could all do with: a successor to Maurice Barling's *How You Anything to Declare?* Perhaps the finest piece of criticism in this book is the long study of Nabokov's *Invitation to a Beheading*, with its particularly cogent passage on Nabokov and Chateaubriand. But then there is not a dull page in this book. Even the index is funny with an entry for "rabbit manure" slipped in between *Rabbit, Run*, *Rabbit Rich*, and *Rabbit Redux*. These pieces, once picked up, will not be put down.

Alan Bance

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TLS Commentary

Men, women and madness

By Frank Kermode

Film based on good, or even quite good, books usually make little more than unmemorable allusions to their originals: a version of the fable is certainly preserved, but the subject or discourse tends to be dissipated by the camera and the soundtrack. Novels are arguably the least suitable "material" for movies; if this seems paradoxical or perverse, consider whether a director would not work more imaginatively with say, "The Beast in the Jungle" than with *The Portrait of a Lady*.

Milos Forman seems conscious of the difficulty and seeks, with some success, to overcome it by implanting in his film of *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* a strongly drawn diagram—coarsely drawn, was going to say—of Ken Kesey's theme, and so buying himself the right to provide the film with a feature resembling very little in the original, though in itself more than adequately interesting. The effect is curious: the audience is moved to cry out with approval and sympathy as the hero struggles to outwit his oppressors; a very simple reaction indeed, yet produced while the screen is filled with the subtle and delicate visual images. Here, perhaps, is the beginning of an explanation of the mixed feelings the film produces, embarrassment and pleasure among them.

In the new *Quinzaine Littéraire* there is an interview in which Milos Forman offers a few caustic, unguarded remarks about what he had been trying to do. The narrator in the novel is a schizophrenic Indian; Forman altered

this, not simply because of the obvious difficulties but because he prefers "objective" narration. Nurse Ratched, the principal tormentor of the inmates of the hospital, is to be represented, not as she is, but as she is perceived by the inmates. The film is almost as simple as he claims. There is the face of the inmate, the face of the doctor, the face of the nurse, the face of the patient, the face of the Indian, the face of the Indian's wife, and the face of the Indian's child. On these faces the whole play is played out. Yet the priests were symbolist; it arises inevitably from a certain crudeness in the thematic diagram as the film exposes it.

Ken Kesey's novel had a small cult in the early 1960s. Then, for a while, the times seemed to be strongly on its side. The Nurse easily merged into fashionable concepts such as Repressive Tolerance, her patients into its compliant victims, endorsing her worst tyrannies by democratic vote, even when she denies them the primordial right of American males to watch the World Series on television, and mental hospitals became images of hell but of the Larger Society.

But Randle Patrick McMurphy is a more old-fashioned symbol. Sly, strong, exuberant, male, he gambles, fights, drinks, womanizes: an Irish boy who certainly represents the anti-social behaviour of the Nurse exists to suppress. Half clown, half phantasm, (to employ a terminology fashionable in 1962),

LITERATURE AND PSYCHOLOGY

The critic in the consulting room

By Rosemary Dinnage

FREDERICK CREWS: *Out of My System* 214pp. Oxford University Press. £5.50.

Frederick Crews writes from out of his system—his conservative Freudianism, to which he has a firm commitment—and he writes to get the problems of his commitment out of his system. The title is deliberate catch in the title is typical of his authorial stance, which is ambivalent itself: Professor Crews the Freudian argues cleverly and at length with a worthy opponent, Professor Crews the literary critic. A good fight is put up by both sides: the result is a draw.

Out of My System is a collection of articles, lectures and reviews of books, written in a style that is both scholarly and popular. The theme that gives the first chapter its title: "Can literature be psychoanalyzed?" Some of the chapters are on student papers and one on the American New Left, even on the post-Freudian Reich and Norman Brown—some somewhat remote from the main theme, in spite of Professor Crews' ingenious connecting glosses. Never was a collection of scattered essays so effectively unified by a single theme. The result, the author tells us in his preface, is "an evolving document, an oblique case history of sorts," tracing what he believes to be the intellectual dilemma of having to choose between empiricism and a seductive commitment to theory. His momentous final decision that "psychoanalysis is a tool suited only for certain operations when certain kinds of problems have been identified" seems as a victory for empiricism, for the "refusal to have one's outlook bounded by a closed interpretive system": a virtue with "extensive consequences for the defense of our institutions." We have worked through. The shrill within has shrunk.

Ingenuity than they are here. Why, asks Crews the Freudian, should we treat literary works as if they were unconnected with the human beings who produced them? The writer creates out of deep subliminal preoccupations and conflicts, and the reader responds in the same fashion; why should we forewear insights that will bring these out of obscurity and illuminate the work? The critic who does so (he continues with a sidelong glance at his colleagues, and in particular Northrop Frye) will find himself either implicitly using some anaesthetic or, if he is a Freudian, repressing his own, or confined to a sterile academicism, or inclined to elevate the formal element in art to the status of a religion.

To study both latent and overt intentions in an author brings out the richness and complexity of the work; consideration of form and overt content alone insulates us hysterically from the emotional turmoil that is inseparable from it, and produces, in every sense of the word, anaesthetic criticism. The work can be better understood in their context if its author's conflicts are understood. Thus, Freudian criticism, from the famous old chestnut of Conrad himself, to the more recent work of Norman O. Brown and Norman Holland, has been reductionist—"find the devouring mother, detect the inevitable castration anxiety, listen between the syllables to the repressed, and so on." But it need not be so. Rightly used, the "value of literary psychoanalysis is that it can embolden us to be alone with books, to recognize our own image in them, and from that recognition to begin comprehending their hold over us."

Thus, throughout most of the book, Crews the Freudian routs Crews the literary purist, who remains in the background as a kind of strict parent telling his double not to get into that nasty Freudian dirt, and is gleefully defied. But in the final chapter a rapprochement takes place: the protagonists shake hands on the fact that the persisting tendency of psychoanalytical criticism is indeed reductionist, and the reason lies in the root assumptions of Freudian metapsychology, which sees man as a creature chiefly preoccupied with control and defence, stresses conflict rather than synthesis, and equates the work of art with the fantasy of a wish-fulfillment. His composition, the work is mistaken for a "need-satisfying, as opposed to a meaning-generating device."

Neo-Freudian criticism like that of Ernst Kris, the author continues, although apparently more liberal, is equally reductionist in its assumptions of a passive and defensive conception of mind; and although, unlike most American writers in this field, he is aware of the existence of British psychoanalytic writers such as D. W. Winnicott and Melanie Klein, he does not find that they leave the problem of reduction to infantile motifs essentially unchanged. A kind of summit agreement between the debaters is negotiated, there, and against psychoanalytical literary criticism have not been arrayed with more panache and

stocked with misplaced energies; we expect confessions and instead we get tropical storms. The very fact that the plots are so crammed with adventure is symptomatic of the reductionist view: the hero is kept too busy striving off to spare time for self-analysis, and in most cases are finally meant to think of him as a victim of hard luck. The reductionist view of projection—into the landscape, into "the whole scheme of things, of which we form a helpless part"—in order to blunt an insight which would amount to self-analysis.

Here the whole status and intention of art as opposed to the materialist view of the artist as a madman is in question. It is not so much a matter, even, of mistaking a novel for a "need-satisfying" device, as of mistaking it for a botched psychoanalytic session. An implication would be that if only Lear, for instance, had taken a little time for self-inquiry into his undoubtedly grave personal problems we might have been spared all that insightful blunting stuff about blasted heaths and furrow-weeds. This is entirely to mistake the symbol-forming nature of the imagination, which precisely does embody feelings, in terms of jungles, palaces, swans and literature, dreams, and even in the high moments of psychoanalytical exploration.

"The meaning" of *Heart of Darkness*, if such a word is permissible at all, must surely lie in some kind of terrifying confrontation with the self, with an immensely powerful, and in some sense, god-like, nucleus. To assign the book's whole import to a conventional Freudian motif is no worse than to see it chiefly as a critique of imperialism or an attack on Christian hypocrisy or a "grail quest." (Interpretations of *Heart of Darkness* are legion; but, although, like them, it puts too much weight on one possible aspect of its meaning, it goes even further by mistaking the transforming nature of artistic imagination—which is to repeat the past by making it new—yet them with emotion—for the pri-

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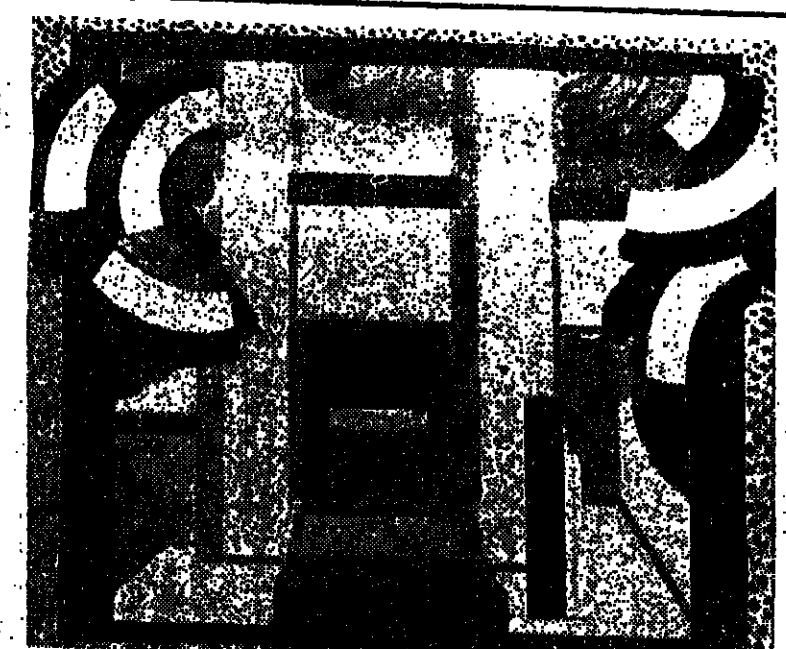
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Salon and workshop

If I could ever really succeed I would paint pictures that were so direct, and in which the subject was so displayed, that each would be like a place of fruit being handed to you on a plate.

"Howard Hodgkin, 45 Paintings 1949-75" opened last Sunday at the Museum of Modern Art, Oxford, where it can be seen until April 18. The paintings will then be shown in what must be a dream setting for an artist: the Serpentine Gallery in Kensington Gardens in May. Howard Hodgkin has, again, achieved his ideal of handling his painting like a piece of fruit on a plate and deserves no less for his first retrospective than the most sympathetic gallery and the best month in the year. It is, however, an important occasion not only for the artist, but for British painting, and for painting in general.



Grantchester Road, 1975, by Howard Hodgkin.

Mr. Hodgkin most often paints his friends—many of them artists of his own generation (he was born in 1932)—usually in their own surroundings, and at special moments. They are like portraits that epitomize, heightened recollections. "Ideally," he has said, "they should be like memories." He paints places on the same terms ("On the edge of the Indian Ocean" or interiors—"Small Staff Room"). But in these

his is sixteen, a remarkable interior showing a beautiful woman reclining on a sofa and a bull-headed voyeur seated in a chair. It is, as Mr. Hodgkin points out, an astonishing anticipation of nearly everything Mr. Hodgkin has done since he came into his own as an artist.

It was in 1945 that Mr. Hodgkin painted his first painting, a small, dark, abstract work. He has since painted many more, and his work has become increasingly abstract and expressive. His paintings are often characterized by bold, expressive brushstrokes and a rich, textured surface. He has painted many portraits of his friends, and his work has been exhibited in many galleries and museums.

Indian miniature painting, on which Mr. Hodgkin is an authority. In the twenty years the field has been the subject of the kind of scrutiny once applied with the passion of discovery to the Italian Renaissance. Again, Mr. Hodgkin's paintings indicate a community of making with the classical Indian painters. His exceptionally achieved "Indian Subcontinent" (1965-66) memorably combines the very components combined by a Kishangarh court painter.

All his paintings are very specific and individual, and their grammar is exceptionally varied. If there is any flaw in the introduction it is that Mr. Hodgkin has not sufficiently discussed his community of ideas with painters of pictures, for many of his contemporaries, Richard Morris, for example, are at work in the same way as Mr. Hodgkin.

Another important influence is the modern political myth, of course, remains; naked violence has gone out in mental images except as a last resort (Rachid's purpose) and they continue to be oppressed by more sophisticated means; so the conflict between Rachid and McMurphy and the conflict between the Nurse and the inmates of the hospital are not so different as they seem. The Nurse's actions that we observe the conflict. They are more than adequate to the task. Lady Fletcher as the Nurse has devoted limited but wonderfully expressive use of faces: a sense of the rightness of the kindness, which shifts, with little perceptible alteration, into a mask of hatred and menace that is as well somehow forbidding. Jack Nicholson's performance is at least as remarkable as the Nurse's, and the same is true of the other actors. The last word should, however, be Richard Morris's.

Contemplating Hodgkin's paint, it is as if we have access simultaneously to the world of the complete and of Mondrian, as if we are looking at a palm house and a kitchen with packages at the end of a check-out, are at once in a salon and at a workshop bench.

Mark Haworth-Booth

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division" and to conclude by favouring these dangerous, intolerant, anxious insights except for the rare occasions when it is appropriate to "borrow the clinical outlook".

Why, though, should it be self-divisive to begin fully to recognize the difference in status between art and consulting-room material, and why the clinical outlook which is for borrowing—as though perception of symbolic *surata* and patterns were only in the domain of psychopathology, and limited to a few things? Professor Crews's inflated picture of therapeutic work itself is, for one thing, unnecessarily reductionist: is there not in fact a connection between the elegance of a dream or association of ideas, and the depth of psychic reorganization that accompanies them? And are dreams and fantasies, in or out of therapy, to be regarded as defensive cryptograms, rather than ingenious, fluid structures which recognize possibilities and suggest solutions? Even if the clinical outlook is entirely as he envisages it, however, it is not the only aspect of psychoanalytic perception available. The energy that elaborates a dream which can be put to use in therapy may also, disciplined by a medium, produce a poem or play; and the themes in both may range over innumerable aspects of time, identity, and relationship, and be as much creative as defensive. As Saul Bellow has said: "Stereotypes are not raised to conceal dead mice."

There seems no necessity for insights to be limited to the squeaking bedsprings, nor for themes of which the author was unconscious to have a fearful power to shiver appreciation of his work once

detected. Two things are, however, needed within psychoanalysis: a re-appraisal of the epistemological status of imaginative truth, to free it from the longstanding association with unreality and "dishonesty"; and equally a reappraisal of the formative experiences producing the extraordinary confidence that turns conflicts into art rather than neurosis. The result would not be to produce a new set of psychoanalytical interpretations for the use of critics, but to subordinate them to an absolute regard for imaginative truth.

Recent psychoanalytical writings are starting the process of reevaluation. Professor Crews mentions, rather briefly, the importance of British contributions: "when art is analysed to the 'transitional' teddy bear instead of to the dream, it is still being treated as something other than itself, and its biographical genesis is still favoured over its public import." This is too superficial a dismissal: for when the very earliest use of the symbolic made is traced, it can eventually lead to a new understanding of the key position of make-believe and play and, in direct sequence, of art and its "illusions". When Freud showed a patient his cherished antique statuette in order to explain the nature of dream symbolism, why did he spend his money on these illusions?—he was touching on the transitional area that Professor Crews mentions, and making a comparison which he might have developed further. Perhaps if he had trusted the truth of his own imaginative response he would have been less ungenerous towards the autonomy and dignity of the work of art.

Hidden worlds

By Martin Turnell

ANDRÉ THÏSSE:
Rimbaud Devant Dieu
318pp. Paris: Librairie José Corti.
65fr.

"The true poet", writes André Thïsse, "is the visionary who must enter into relations with the hidden world." It is probable that there has always been something of the visionary in the world's greatest creative writers, but in the nineteenth century the term "vision" acquired new meanings and a new importance. It is not to be regarded merely as a form of insight or intuition. It goes much further than that. Nor should it be regarded as religious in an exclusive sense. Its special importance in the last century was largely the result of the decline in religious belief and the growth of science and secular philosophy. Even if they were not religious belief like Zola, the writers set out to discover what they came to regard as the true reality of life.

Rimbaud put it succinctly. "Le poète", he said in a letter to Georges Izambard in 1871, "as fait voguer par un long, immense et raisonné dérèglement de tous les sens." The words show that the dominant attitude of his maturity as a poet was to become a revolutionary outlook and a virtually complete rejection of the world as generally accepted, which he regarded as the main obstacle to his search for the "hidden world" or true reality. For him revolution was a process of change and renewal, without which tradition runs dry and degenerates into dogmatism. Without the directive force of a tradition of some kind, however

This does not mean that, whatever Rimbaud himself thought at one time or another, he became a simple unbeliever. "The poet's religion", observes M. Thïsse, "is absolutely unequalled in power, and if he does not adhere to Catholicism, his vision is impregnated with it." It is supported by one of Rimbaud's own comments in *Une Saison en enfer*:

Hélas! L'Evangile a passé! L'Evangile a passé! L'Evangile a passé!
J'attends Dieu avec gourmandise.

This is a clear indication that his rebellion was against traditional religion, but not against religion itself. That is why we have the continual impression that he is "devant Dieu" whatever the actual state of his beliefs.

M. Thïsse's study is an extremely detailed examination of the poet's attitude to existence and an acute analysis of the many problems that his work represents. No one can be truly sure about the meaning of the *Illuminations*, as we can see from the various contradictory interpretations by a number of commentators. One of the principal problems is the date of composition. M. Thïsse is surely right in his insistence on the view that some of them were written before, and some after, *Une Saison*. And again, it is often impossible to decide which is which. It is significant that the *Illuminations* were eventually brought to publication by Verlaine thirteen years after *Une Saison* without any reference to Rimbaud, who had settled abroad, and got only given up writing, but had lost all interest in poetry.

This supports M. Thïsse's view that *Une Saison* is the only one of the mature works which can be regarded as a complete and unified

work. It is a view which, however, no doubt, has been expressed in the past. In spite of a similarity of style and theme, the undoubted greatness as creative writing, *Une Saison*, on the other hand, seems a virtually complete representation of everything with which Rimbaud had tried to do himself, and everything that he had tried to do. It leads to M. Thïsse's description of his departure to Abyssinia, "le second exil", which refers back to *Une Saison*. It means that in spite of his poetic greatness Rimbaud had failed to solve his own problem, had been unsuccessful in his attempt to discover what he supposed to be the hidden reality of life through his revolutionary revolt, and had given up. Although it has nothing to do with his poetry, his deathbed conversion to Catholicism is in its way a confirmation of it all.

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To the Editor

'The Erotic Arts'

Sir—Any author must welcome fair criticism, and I felt flattered to see your two-page illustrated review of my book *The Erotic Arts* in the TLS (February 20). The feeling was somewhat diluted, however, by the personal tone of your reviewer.

Peter Conrad has every right to his opinion that I am a puritan masquerading as a liberal, though one can regret the closest sexual viewpoint that leads him to this conclusion. But it is hardly the ideal basis for a balanced critique of an authoritative study of eroticism in the arts. One hopes that a paper such as yours will choose a suitably knowledgeable reviewer for a serious book. Mr. Conrad's expertise is, I believe, confined to the Victorian era; certainly his review concentrates on nineteenth-century personalities and gives evidence at the same time of a pervasively Victorian view of sex as an onanistic pleasure: "We are never more alone, more imprisoned in solitary fantasy, than during a sexual act."

In my preface I clearly stated that my aim was to investigate the role eroticism has played in Western art in comparison with the oriental, classical and primitive worlds, making special reference to works of art I had discovered in restricted collections, and to relate this study to the wider context of literature, film and theatre. Mr. Conrad makes little constructive criticism of the positive contribution such a project can make, and instead takes up an almost entirely negative position, concentrating much of his lengthy review on my "political approach to the issue for freedom from sexual repression, which occupies about five of the 500 pages of my book. This leads him, via a tasteless joke about the dedication in the book, to bemoan my having taken away his "elevated rights of fantasy". For Mr. Conrad sexual pleasure is a futile business which must result in "estrangement from society", so he seems to feel threatened by the implications of a more liberated viewpoint. This would hardly be his own, were it not for the resulting attack on me for presuming to bring artists' erotica into the open. "He is the enemy of closed doors and reserve collections... rebuking the British Museum for stigmatising those who wish to read its dirty books." Yet one notes the avid interest Mr. Conrad shows in the hitherto restricted art works reproduced in the book.

The illustrations are of crucial importance, as Mr. Conrad acknowledges with rare candour, and one would hope that he would bring knowledgeable appreciation of them to this review. His remarks on certain images are not, however, encouraging: "nothing in the dubious realm of Lewis Carroll's sexual interest is at all clear" (quite apart from his theories, the erotic interests in the photographs of scantily clad little girls are very clear); Rops's works are "a creation of travesty not blasphemy, witty rather than obscene" (a knowledge of the artist shows that many of them are deliberately and obscenely blasphemous); "Hockney's subjects are almost exclusively erotic" (Hockney says in an interview in the book that he has not been particularly concerned with eroticism in his work). Similarly his comments on Rowlandson and Fuseli are open to question, as are his remarks on Von Bayros, whom he mistakenly believes to be a woman.

My book ends with a thirty-page critical bibliography, the first so far as I know to cover the whole field of eroticism. This Mr. Conrad ignores. If he had been more aware of the literature in this field of study, he could have made a more useful contribution in his extensive review.

PETER B. WEBB,
Middlesex Polytechnic, Crouch
End Hill, London N8 8DG.

'Dissent in the USSR'

Sir—Jack Miller is right, it is no good arguing by quotation. But his letter (January 16) does just this, lifting my statements out of context, when nearly sentences make an almost opposite point: that my conversations with "ordinary" Russians sometimes suggested wider discontent than isolated, pessimistic Moscow intellectuals credit them for.

Mr. Miller's almost every reference to my writing pulls their points one way or another to suit his own. The trouble starts at the very beginning, when he has me expressing "despair" at what [I] then thought was the absence of any protest against the invasion of Czechoslovakia. I did once write a description of Moscow on the day following the invasion, the point of which was that I encountered surprisingly little protest. It seemed important to say this in 1968 because the West was then nurtured on some popular misconceptions about Soviet dissent; and despite Mr. Miller's claim that my views have changed—valid only if one accepts his misunderstanding of where they started—I would want to alter nothing of this now. I thought the famous "Hands Off" banner was unfurled in Red Square on the following Sunday, my *Message from Moscow* specifically mentioned that brief demonstration, then went on to say my friends' reaction to such protest. Why does Mr. Miller have me say there was none?

Substituting "none" for "little" he changes everything: my reliability as a reporter, the perspective of my observations, the purpose of my compounding this error. I never thought, wrote or implied that "virtually all" Soviet intellectuals regard dissent as "useless or foolhardy". What I did do was describe the pessimism of a small group of people (not all intellectuals and not all willing to agree about "useless"), who were clearly labelled so

that the reader would not think them for more than they were. And Mr. Miller's "virtually all" is a very different matter. It is his entire review attributed to me ideas I didn't have when sent began and don't have now. May fit someone else but he mentions my "first book" which I never wrote, the position he has me take is mine, not mine.

GEORGE PUGH,
15 Hyde Park Square, London

The Anglican Communion

Sir—The first paragraph of Kenyon's review (March 5) of Bennett's book *The Holy Church and State 1688-1719* is a lot of steam in a well-worn judgment and aesthetic style which spill over into the next paragraph. No doubt that I these he is then moved to write

"In the iron years of the Restoration and Counter-Reformation [the Church of England] played back to the first words of paragraph one, and immediately casting back to his stylistic judgement] was unique among the churches of the West in its knowledge of the Mass in a strictly ritual." Opinions and judgments are one thing, facts are another, though one would expect the historian as for facts, also not unconnected.

The Communion Service in Anglican Prayer Books of 1549 and 1662 is in no sense a translation of the Mass in any language, but should the reader know the score? Since I am compiling a critical bibliography of Inner Asia, I have in fact read every issue of *Central Asian Review* since its founding. The quality of the article is uneven. That I did not cite the *Central Asian Review* in my selected bibliography, which included "only the more important studies consulted" (page 309) does not seem to me to be a valid criticism.

(2) After indicating that my description of the minorities under Chinese Communist rule is clear and objective, Mr. Wheeler complains that I ignore "the sharply contrasting assessments of conditions in these areas made by the Soviet Union and by Western specialists". He describes these wildly extravagant claims, then concludes that "all that can be said is that the truth probably lies somewhere between the two assessments described above". How does this add to our knowledge? I see no point in endless, uninformed speculation about conditions in areas which are, in Mr. Wheeler's words, "not open to impartial investigation and which are the subject of contrasting types of wishful thinking". I repeat what I wrote in my preface: "As more reliable information becomes accessible, the changes in the area (since 1949) will be more comprehensible, and another chapter can then be added to this book."

(3) Mr. Wheeler is distressed because I use the term Inner Asia to describe an area that is now controlled by the Soviet Union and China, employ the term as a geographical, not political, concept. Would Mr. Wheeler have us abandon geographical terms when they are not congruent with contemporary political realities? If so, would he dispense with the term "Middle East" during the time when that region was controlled by the Ottomans?

MORRIS ROSSABI,
Department of History, Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland, Ohio, 44106.

Hopefully

Sir—Perhaps we have not quite caught up with the Germans as I said in my letter of February 27 (and I must add the Dutch, with *hopefully*, because alongside *hoffentlich* they have also *hoffnungslos* (hopeless) and so the ambiguity against which Charles Montagu recently warns us does not arise for them. Clarity must certainly be the criterion in any linguistic question. Hence, if we really want such an adjective (and quite well without one), we must either adopt some neologism such as "hopefully" (three syllables) on the analogy of "reportedly" (cf. today's paper [March 13]: "She was reportedly presented to King William, or we must make the rule that 'hopefully' in the new sense is only good English when it is first word in the sentence."

D. B. GREGOR,
34 Watersmeet, Northampton.

'China and Inner Asia'

Sir—I enjoy lively and contentious book reviews. But I think that authors subjected to such reviews ought to be offered a chance at rebuttal. It is in this spirit that I write to question some of Geoffrey Wheeler's views of my book *China and Inner Asia* (February 20).

(1) Mr. Wheeler reprimands me for not citing references included in *Central Asian Review* and *Mizan*. I think that Mr. Wheeler ought to have mentioned that he was the editor of those journals. I don't object to Mr. Wheeler's blowing his own horn, but should the reader know the score? Since I am compiling a critical bibliography of Inner Asia, I have in fact read every issue of *Central Asian Review* since its founding. The quality of the article is uneven. That I did not cite the *Central Asian Review* in my selected bibliography, which included "only the more important studies consulted" (page 309) does not seem to me to be a valid criticism.

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MORRIS ROSSABI,
Department of History, Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland, Ohio, 44106.

Jane Austen Manuscripts

Sir—The proof of my review (March 5) of Herbert Cahoon's *Jane Austen Letters and Manuscripts in the Pierpont Morgan Library* did not reach the TLS in time. Among corrections which should have been made was, of course, the spelling of the library's name. The Red Cross sale at which the opening pages of *The Watsons* were first separated from the rest was during the First World War, April 26, 1915, not 1922.

JACK WHITE is the author of *Private Report: The Anatomy of Southern Irish Protestantism*, 1974.

The credo of craftsmanship

By Simon Jervis

HAROLD OSBORNE (Editor):
The Oxford Companion to the
Decorative Arts
865pp. Oxford University Press.
£10.50.

It was long a prevalent opinion among moralists, that the labour bestowed on the production of luxuries, and consequently their consumption, was unproductive. But this opinion is now almost universally abandoned. Unless, indeed, all comforts and enjoyments are to be proscribed, it is impossible to say where necessities end and luxuries begin.

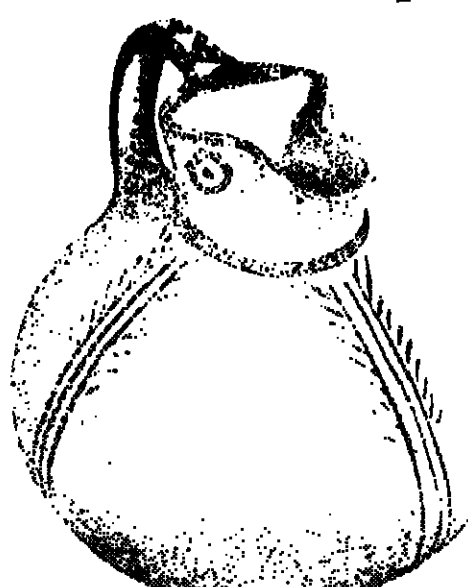
Although written in 1816 by the economist J. R. McCulloch, these confident words might happily preface some plausible vindication of modern consumer society. It is dubious whether the bump of acquisitiveness has dramatically expanded in this generation. But there is no doubt that acquisition has. And one of the symptoms of this phenomenon has been a sustained explosion of interest and trade in artefacts of the past, whether luxuries or necessities. Thus on their television sets consumers may contemplate an editing contest based not on the measured phrases of such relics, but also on their price. That it is a war for this new marketplace is evident from the jacket of the new *Oxford Companion to the Decorative Arts*.

This depicts a variety of superlative Rothschild collections, and a museum of manners. On the other hand unsatisfactory terms such as Queen Anne, William and Mary, Georgian and Regency are given more of a run than they deserve, although Neo-Georgian, Edwardian, Victorian (and, praise be, Victoriana) are absent. Neoclassicism is treated at a proper length but in apparent defiance of equity the Gothic Revival is absent.

Other major omissions which might seem essential candidates for generous discussions in this *Companion to the Decorative Arts* are patronage and collecting, design and ornament. But they are at worst neglected, at best fragmented. The same fate has befallen a number of important subsidiary fields, for example pattern, schools of design, heraldry, emblems and exhibitions.

Now the *Companion* might be excused for not grasping the nettle if it were intended as purely lexicographical accumulation of detailed fact. However, the preface makes it clear that the intention is to give introductory guidance to "a unifying concept and guiding thread"—the idea of fine craftsmanship. The fundamental role of craftsmanship in the decorative arts is self-evident, and the full coverage of techniques and materials in the *Companion* is one of its best features. But the various crafts are so essentially static and disparate that craftsmanship seems almost a contradiction in terms, a unifying concept and guiding thread.

Why does craftsmanship, a precise enough term until transformed by the Ruskin/Morris/arts-and-crafts axis into a moral, virtuous occupancy of the word, have come to embody a whole series of personally enticing visions, whether romantic (the craftsman as solo artist), populist (the craftsman as working-class hero), postmodernist (the craftsman as sturdy tradesman), or even pure academic (the craftsman as Cornwell peasant). In the 1970s, when the twentieth-century revolution in architecture and design seems revealed, amid bitterness and racism, as a burn-out case, nostalgia for a green and pleasant never-never land is almost too obvious to need to be pointed out. The craftsman (William Morris has by far the longest biographical entry in the



for Gothic, and just over a column for Rococo, no entries for Renaissance and Mannerism. On the other hand unsatisfactory terms such as Queen Anne, William and Mary, Georgian and Regency are given more of a run than they deserve, although Neo-Georgian, Edwardian, Victorian (and, praise be, Victoriana) are absent. Neoclassicism is treated at a proper length but in apparent defiance of equity the Gothic Revival is absent.

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Un glazed wheel-thrown
Gresen Jug, about four
inches high and 3,000
years old; and (below)
a Hispano-Moresque
bowl from about the
fifteenth century,
painted in lustre over
the enamel; two pieces
from the selection of
"exemplary pots"
illustrated in The
Potter's Challenge by
Bernard Leach (1959p).
Sawenir, (13.50), which
includes some material
from his Potter's
Portfolio (1951) and
edited transcripts of
interviews with Leach
by David E. Overbridge,
who also edited this book.

their ability to innovate was not a product of their craftsmanship.

This emphasis on craftsmanship at the expense of design is the most serious imbalance in the *Companion*. There is also too great a tendency to parochialism. Why such a long, anglocentric and bland article on inn signs ("For centuries the British people have cherished their local inn")? There is nothing on shop signs generally or internationally? Should the eight-plus pages and nine illustrations on pewter have concentrated quite so exclusively on the British tradition? Traditional automatic anti-Victorian bias also appears: "Nothing can be said in favour of the wallpaper designs at that time"—so much for Lugin and Owen Jones. Some subjects, however interesting in themselves, are out of place—for example, cartography (six-plus pages) and diagrams (four pages). Others are relatively over-extended—examples, canal-bout decoration, English landscape gardening, private presses; or skimmed—Du Cerceau, Thonet. And there are too many omissions—examples, Barbedienne, barometers, Crace, Fourdinois, Piranesi, scagliola, turning. The internal cross-reference system is inadequate; for instance a brief account of Tunbridge ware is hidden among over fifteen pages on wood-working. There is also duplication as with two entries on marquetry: the entry on lacquer and japanning even admits to it. Finally the bibliography, less than a third of the size of that in the *Companion to Art*, has some notable lacunae, including one of the *Companion's* most distinguished predecessors, Havard's *Dictionnaire de l'ameublement*.

Most books of reference are vulnerable to criticism in detail. In spite of flaws the contents of the *Companion* are its strength. Its weakness is its structure. The decorative arts turn out to be an accumulation of what is left over from the *Companion to Art*, a Tom Tiddler's ground for those with specialist interests, but a landscape without wider perspectives. This is a pity. The study of the decorative arts has made progress in recent years but the focus has almost invariably been narrow. There is a real need for light on such basic questions as the nature of design, the use of decoration, the causes of sumptuary expenditure and, to cite McCulloch's words once more, the point "where necessities end and luxuries begin". On these subjects this *Companion* is silent.

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